

8 NOV 1968

Approved For Release 2004/11/01 : CIA-RDP88-01315R000200300001-2

SOUTH VIET NAM

Above the Battle

Scanning from the left seat, Pilot Pat Evans spotted a brilliant flash on a hilltop 7,900 feet below. A pair of fighter planes wheeled in, tossing bombs into the jungle. Then a string of helicopters settled to earth and squads of infantrymen leaped from them, firing as they ran. Evans shrugged. "They are fighting like hell down there," he said, "and for us it is business as usual."

It may be business as usual for any one of the 40 other pilots of Saigon-based Continental Air Services, but the business itself is most unusual. CAS, a subsidiary of the U.S.'s Continental Air Lines, operates in Viet Nam, Laos and Thailand, and has become the prime commercial charter carrier in an area where ground travel is usually difficult and often impossible. In Viet Nam, which is home for half of its 50-plane fleet, CAS links dozens of airstrips from the DMZ to the Mekong Delta. Each month it carries 20,000 passengers and some 1,300,000 lbs. of cargo. Its customers, mainly U.S. contractors in Viet Nam, do not demand much in the way of frills. "Here you keep up your image by keeping your planes flying," says CAS Administrative Manager Jim Eckes, 33. "You get down to essentials."

The essentials can be tough enough. A CAS plane was one of the last to

leave the Citadel at Hue when North Vietnamese regulars stormed in. Another dropped in at Khe Sanh during the height of the siege to evacuate two wounded newsmen. Even in ordinary operations, CAS pilots, most of whom are ex-military aviators, more than earn their average tax-free pay of \$2,000 a month. Often their "airstrips" are barely that—for example, at Nui Sap the strip is a 60-ft.-wide dike top that stretches for 960 ft. between two paddyfields. There are V.C. potshotters on the ground, swarms of U.S. fighters, transports, helicopters and spotter planes in the air. "Our major hazard," complains Chief Pilot Ed Dearborn, "is overcrowded airways, not the enemy." So far, the CAS has lost only one plane, a small Beechcraft that crashed while landing in the prop wash of a big transport.

Los Angeles-based Continental Air Lines, which has been encouraged by the U.S. in its efforts to set up a reliable air service in Southeast Asia, started CAS in 1965 by taking over a small U.S.-owned, Laotian-based "air-taxi" service. Its Laotian business was (and through CAS, still is) run in close cooperation with Air America, the less than secret CIA-sponsored outfit.

Continental's really important work has come in Viet Nam. It won Saigon's permission to take contracts from RMK-BRJ, the big U.S. construction combine, and other U.S. firms, agreeing in return to pay a royalty to Air Viet Nam, the understaffed government airline that has a nominal monopoly on Vietnamese commercial air travel. Having assembled a motley but eminently suitable short-haul fleet led by eight vintage C-47 transports, CAS expects to take in at least \$9,000,000 this year and make its first annual profit.

Deft Maneuvers. Flamboyant Robert Six, Continental Air Lines' 61-year-old president, is after much larger dividends. Asia holds a tremendous fascination for him, which is traceable only in part to the fact that his third wife, Actress Audrey Meadows, was born in China. Six sees a big future in Asia and wants to

make sure that Continental, the eleventh-ranked U.S. carrier, gets a share of it. Continental has based its plans to become a major international airline on winning some of the new air routes to be handed out under the expansion of trans-Pacific service now being considered by Washington. Continental received no routes from the Civil Aeronautics Board examiner who made the preliminary recommendations last April. The airline now pins its hopes on the President, who has the final say.

Meanwhile, back in Saigon, CAS has been performing some deft maneuvers to ensure its own future. In September, it signed an agreement to form with Air Viet Nam a yet unnamed airline that will handle all Vietnamese contract and charter air business. CAS, whose 50% share in the new venture assures it a reasonably secure future in Viet Nam, will initially operate the airline. "De-Americanization" of the war promises to be even more lucrative. CAS might well inherit military air transport chores that could increase the line's business tenfold.

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Air Service

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By Tom Kelley, Staff Photographer

MRS. PIERRE SALINGER
... she couldn't understand defeat

Nicole Salinger Volunteers:

Pierre's Press Secretary

By Dorothy McCardle
Washington Post Staff Writer

Former White House press secretary Pierre Salinger could have no better press agent for his forthcoming book, "With Kennedy," than his bride of a year.

Petite, vivacious Nicole Salinger, who married Pierre in Paris, last June 18, was in town yesterday with him, and she talked more about his 500-page memoirs of his years with the late President John F. Kennedy than she did about her two-month-old son, Gregory.

She read every chapter as her husband wrote it, and she offered suggestions.

"I kept telling him to give more and more details of all the fascinating episodes he shared with your late President," she says. "Sometimes he took my advice."

She never met JFK, but she feels now as if she knows him well as the result of her husband's book.

SHE SAYS that former First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy edited the one chapter in the book about herself. Sen. Robert F. Kennedy read the entire manuscript and gave it his approval.

The title of the book, originally, was to have been "Lancer to Wayside," but was changed when the publishers felt that the reader would not realize that "Lancer" was the code name for JFK and "Wayside" the code name for Salinger.

Mrs. Salinger brought a professional literary skill of her own to the proofreading of his book. She is the author of a book of her own and has written many articles for various French magazines.

Pierre took little more than a year to complete the book although he served as

vice president of Continental Air Lines all during the period.

"He worked early in the morning or at night after dinner and over the weekends," reports Mrs. Salinger.

She spent her time redecorating their five-bedroom home in West Hollywood and getting ready for the expected baby while he typed away upstairs.

THE FRENCH - BORN Mrs. Salinger was chic in a short—but not too short—pink linen sheath. She wore with it a handsome amethyst brooch which her husband brought her from Korea last week. She says she is against showing too much of the knee unless one has exceptionally pretty legs.

She told of her romance with Salinger which began with two interviews for a Paris newspaper. The first interview she had with him was in California when he was running for the U.S. Senate. The second was in Paris after his defeat.

"I called him up to ask why he could possibly have been defeated," she says. "I could not understand it then and I still cannot understand it, now that I live in California."

AFTER the second interview in Paris in December, 1964, Salinger began to date her, and they were married the following June.

Young Mrs. Salinger has the equivalent of a master's degree from the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced Studies in Italy.

MAR 3 1966

Louis H. Mueller, 70, Steps Down as Chairman Of Continental Air Lines

By a WALL STREET JOURNAL Staff Reporter

LOS ANGELES—Louis H. Mueller resigned as chairman and director of Continental Air Lines.

Mr. Mueller, founder of Continental's predecessor company, was 70 years old Feb. 13. He said he resigned to devote more time to personal pursuits, but will maintain his holdings of Continental common stock.

A spokesman for Continental said the question of a successor may come before a directors meeting May 3, but won't be decided before then.

Robert F. Six, president, said the company accepted Mr. Mueller's resignation with "extreme regret" and will continue to seek his counsel from time to time.

Mr. Mueller founded in 1934 the Southwest division of Varney Speed Lines with the assistance Walter Varney. The company began operations with eight employees and three single-engine planes, operating over a 520-mile route system between El Paso, Texas, and Pueblo, Colorado. In 1937, the line changed its name to Continental. Today, with 4,000 employees and 28 aircraft, it serves 21 cities in nine states as well as offering charter service to Europe and operating from the West Coast to the Orient under a military contract.

Mr. Mueller was an Army test pilot and flying instructor during World War I and was president of Varney Airlines from 1929 to 1931, before the formation of the Southwest division of Varney Speed Lines, a separate company.

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Continental is also already active in the southeast portion of the Pacific through its wholly owned subsidiary, Continental Air Services. It acquired this last fall when it bought the air division of Bird & Sons, a San Francisco-based heavy construction company operating in the Orient. At the moment Continental Air Services' fleet of 37 planes performs air and ground contract services for oil, construction, and engineering companies, plus the U.S. Agency for International Development.

Now, Continental Air Lines has hired Pierre Salinger, President Kennedy's press secretary, as its vice-president for international affairs.

PEOPLE IN BUSINESS

FAR EAST POST WITH CONTINENTAL AIR

E. Bailey Ranes, a veteran of 26 years with Continental Airlines, Inc., has been promoted to a new post as vice-president coordinating company activities in the Far East, Robert F. Siz, president, announced over the weekend.

Mr. Ranes, 48, will be based at Taipei, Taiwan, at the President Hotel. He will move there with his wife and 14-year-old daughter in mid-August.

From Taipei, Mr. Ranes will coordinate Continental's Military Air Transport Service contract operations and direct the company's sales operations in the area. In addition, he will assist Continental in formulating plans for new routes in the Pacific and Far East.

A native of Missouri, Mr. Ranes graduated in 1929 from the University of Denver with a bachelor's degree in accounting and business.

He joined Continental that year as an accounting clerk, working his way up to vice-president—customer field services in 1959. He was named vice-president—customer service planning earlier this year.



E. Bailey Ranes